Faith and Inspiration

True Love

This past weekend at Homestead Mennonite Church, we celebrated a joyous occasion of matrimonial union.

An enormously heart-warming facet of the couple's journey towards this momentous affirmation of mutual commitment is that God led them to rediscover their friendship after many years of separate lives, allowing them to draw even closer to one another.

Now, they have embarked on what may be considered perhaps one of the greatest adventures of human relationship as husband and wife.

Our modern society's views and understanding of marriage remain as complex and perhaps even paradoxical as at any given time in history.

Assorted movements and philosophies and subcultures have attempted to either diminish the value and importance of marriage; to subvert it and render it obsolete or undesirable; or to redefine its purpose and parameters to conform to contemporary conventions

Common questions continue to surround the concept of matrimony and even monogamy in general. What is the origin and purpose of marriage? Are human beings intended to have a single mate for life, or even a single mate at a time? Why should anyone get married? Indeed, "why marriage" is probably a legitimate question for anyone to contemplate.

Scripture informs us that God's perspective on marriage is so far elevated above what a secular society might attempt to define. God deemed it appropriate and worthwhile that one man and one woman would enter into a special union of soul and body (Matthew 19:4-6).

The Bible indicates a certain consecration, permanence, and inviolability of this lifelong bond, from which we reference the phrase "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Other passages in the Bible reveal that a couple's participation in this singular human relationship is ultimately intended to illustrate Jesus's love for the Church — described at various times as "the Bride" of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:25-27, Revelation 19:7). With this in mind, we can begin to formulate a Biblical understanding of why marriage exists and how and when it should occur.

As a couple's relationship evolves and expands over time, they may find that their hearts are being prepared for a higher level of intimacy.

Vincent V. Marshburn
Homestead Mennonite Church

Each person in the pair may observe qualities and convictions in the other that they find admirable, appealing, and worthy of supporting and cultivating. When exposed to the "real" person in the midst of stress and pressure, we are often able to behold the true nature of someone's spirit and character, allowing us to assess a potential future together more seriously.

Throughout the course of the television series "Star Trek: Voyager," two characters, Tom Paris and B'Elanna Torres, end up forming a most seemingly unlikely couple. Their personal temperaments and interests appear at first glance quite dissimilar and at odds.

He is a pilot, she is an engineer; he is human, she is half Klingon; he indulges in nostalgic fantasy based on early twentieth century Earth culture; she struggles with her Klingon identity and cultural background; he is something of a rogue and scoundrel; she can be quite inflexible and exacting.

Over time, they discover that, despite their sometimes clashing personalities, their shared devotion to their ship, crew, and friends bonds them together in a unique fashion. They come to realize that, even with their individual flaws and quirks, they actually complement and strengthen each other in ways they would not have anticipated.

In one episode, Tom and B'Elanna's relationship seems to reach a potential breaking point as Tom becomes obsessed with participating in a small-vessel space race. B'Elanna begins to express doubts about their commitment to each other, wondering if she may no longer be a priority in Tom's life. At the suggestion of a crew mate that she should show more interest in Tom's passions and hobbies, B'Elanna joins him as the co-pilot for the race circuit.

During the race, after they have engaged in some conflict over how to best maneuver their ship, B'Elanna exposes some of her misgivings about their state as a couple.

As they proceed through the course, Tom realizes that this may indeed be a serious matter and decides they both need to confront the issues between them. He halts their vessel in the midst of the race so that he can focus on her and express the depths of his feelings. She comes to the understanding that Tom is indeed willing to sacrifice for their relationship if necessary.

TORRES: Hey, I never asked you to give up this race, or anything else that you care about. I never asked you to stop being yourself.
PARIS: The only self that I want to be is the guy you're in love with.
TORRES: Wow. I didn't know you felt that way.
PARIS: How can you say that?
TORRES: Well, you always seem to have other priorities.
PARIS: I'm showing you my priorities right now.
TORRES: How come you never talked to me about this before?
PARIS: Well, you've got that tough Klingon exterior. And er, I didn't think you liked the mushy stuff.
TORRES: Do I look that tough right now?
PARIS: Does that mean you're in the mood for some mushy stuff?
TORRES: Maybe.
PARIS: And there's the happily ever after.
TORRES: How does that one work?
PARIS: Well, traditionally it requires a proposal.

By the episode's finale, Tom Paris and B'Elanna Torres do not win the race, but they do proceed to officially profess their intention to embark on the marital life journey. God does not ask us to give up our individuality or to stop "being ourselves."

However, if we are contemplating a lifetime vow to cherish and promote another's welfare above our own, then we should certainly consider our willingness to set aside our own desires or preferences if it leads to our significant other being diminished, oppressed, or grieved.

As husbands and wives are called to model the love of Jesus in their life together, the Church as a whole, and as members individually, should strive to support their efforts at fulfilling the vows of devotion, fidelity, and service they have pledged.

As Hebrews 13:4 advises: "Marriage is to be held in honor among all." We, the Church, should be able to observe this exercise of sacrificial love and be reminded of Jesus's supreme commitment to the cost of redemption, and of our appropriate response to the appeal and challenge of the gospel: gratitude and obedience.

This is true love: Jesus gave up everything — his power, his glory, his life — to redeem his "bride," the Church, and prepare it for both an ongoing earthly engagement and an eternal ever after.

In answer to the question, "why marriage," we can deduce a reasoning from Jesus himself: he desires an intimate relationship based on unconditional love that transcends superficiality and self-interest. May we be so blessed to share and demonstrate that love.

Obituary

Estelle Chrycy

Our dear mother, Estelle Louise Chrycy sadly passed away on August 25th at 98 years old. She was a wonderful mother who was always there when we needed her.

Born in Christopher, Illinois and raised in Detroit, Michigan, she was a long-term resident of South Florida, having moved to Homestead in 1948.

She was an avid dancer, loved the Florida Keys, but loved her family most of all. She was very active with Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Homestead.

She was predeceased by her beloved husband Raymond and her daughter Joanne Waylett. She is survived by her son Joel who resides in Miami, son Garry of Coral Gables, daughter Carol of Glasgow, Virginia and son Marc of Cape Cod, Massachusetts. In addition, she has seven grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

Temple Hatikvah
Homestead Jewish Center
A Reform Congregation
183 NE 8th St., Homestead
For information please call
305-454-4944
or visit www.thhjc.org

LIONFISH from 1B

to support ocean conservation while combating invasive species. It's so exciting that our teams set a new Florida Keys record of 1,898 invasive lionfish removed. We are very thankful to all of the derby participants, event volunteers, and everyone who attended and helped make the Florida Keys Lionfish Derby & Festival such a great success," said Alli Candelmo, Ph.D., REEF Conservation Science Manager.

REEF is supported in these efforts by, "Conservancy, Ocean Reef Conservation Association, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, TRIAD, Mesara Foundation, and Postcard Inn Beach Resort & Marina. Activities occurred within NOAA Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary under permit."

Currently, the 15th Derby is scheduled for June 20-23, 2024, and individuals interested in participating can visit www.REEF.org/lionfish-derbies.

REEF's mission is to, "protect biodiversity and ocean life by actively engaging and inspiring the public through citizen science, education, and partnerships with the scientific community." For more information, visit www.REEF.org. They have multiple programs for all ages and their campus is located at 98300 Overseas Hwy, Key Largo. "Opened in 2017, the Interpretive Center offers a unique educational, underwater experience without having to get on a boat. A floor-to-ceiling mural combines the many different marine ecosystems found in the Florida Keys. Educational groups are welcome to schedule a formal presentation centered around Fish ID, lionfish, or mangrove ecology. Visitors may also stop in for self-guided tours during business hours. Many of REEF's public programs are held in the Interpretive Center. The Interpretive Center is open Monday – Friday from 9:00am to 5:00 pm, and select evenings and weekends." There is also an outdoor oasis and native plants trail, open from sunrise to sunset.

Fishing for Quality Time with Dad

Ask your dad for advice - Dads love to be asked for advice. For example, ask your fish-loving dad his advice for the best bass-catchin' fishing lures, or what type of presentation you should use for mid-summer walleyes.

Take your dad fishing - Dads always have to ask their kids or grandkids whether they'd like to go fishing. Turn the tables on Dad, ask him to go fishing and plan the entire day.

Get on the water - Spending time on the water fishing with Dad is quality time. Don't own a boat? No worries. You can rent a boat. Borrow a friend's canoe. Buy or rent a couple of kayaks. Or head to the nearest beach, river or stream and cast a line out from a pier or shore.

Learn a new skill - Dads love it when you learn a practical skill that you can use for a lifetime, such as learning to back a trailer or boat up or replacing old fishing line with newer fishing line on his favorite fishing reels.

Look out for your dad when he doesn't know how to look out for himself - Get your dad a good hat, some cool sunglasses and a protective, long-sleeve shirt with UPF 50+ UV protection.

Teach the next generation - What will probably bring the biggest smile to his face is bringing along a new angler to the party and allowing Dad to show your kids how to catch fish. Dads love to teach kids how to fish, remove hooks and safely handle fish.

LESLI BURKHEAD
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